(35)

CHAPTER SIX

THE social life which my parents led with other families in the district towns was shared by us and all the other children. Burmese children do not live in a child's world cut off from reality—there is no specially created world for them like that of J. M. Barrie—they are given enough food for their wildest imagination, but this feeds equally the grandmother and nurses who tell them stories. No special children's parties with cakes and games for them are provided; they go everywhere with the grown-ups, on visits, excursions and festivals, they eat and sleep in the same rooms as the elders and hear most of the conversation. One result is to make Burmese children more conscious of family ties and responsibilities, and to prepare them better for any calamities that may befall them in adolescence or any time before they are fully grown up. Yet no one who sees Burmese children can doubt that delight, wonder and pure joy are present in their lives.

All Burmese social gatherings centre round either religious observances or eating. We are still unsophisticated enough to have the same way of enjoying ourselves whether in city or country, and for that reason these district towns formed such a perfect background for happy days. In the towns that I remember, a river ran through, with sandbanks at edges or in midstream; this, with the monasteries and pagoda precincts a little way out of the busy quarters, private garden orchards and the houses of friends, provided the background for all the social life which my parents had, and is the reason why Burmese people never form social clubs. Most of the officials went to play tennis at the Gymkhana club with European members, but it had no real part in their lives.

When we went on *pyaw-pwè-sas*, happy-eating-gatherings, at pagodas, with two or three other families, the grown-ups, including aunts and dependents of the families, made elaborate food arrangements because the joy of the occasion was to cook on a large-scale in the open air. They took pots, dishes, food and washing apparatus for about twenty people. We started with silent recitation of prayers before the golden spire in the cool morning air, holding silver lilies between folded hands and being so careful not to breathe in the fragrance of the flowers, because my mother taught us that we should not first enjoy the beauty of flowers which are to be offered. When our short prayers were through, we stuck the flowers in a vase or niche at the pagoda base, lighted a row of candles

days when the themes were from mythology and legend rather than modern streets, thus necessitating flights through the air, chariots in the clouds, magical transformations, magnificences of palaces and celestial gardens lighted by the moon. Now the films go in largely for themes of real life, but unlike Western films, the actors and actresses still do not set the standard for everyday dress and behaviour. A cinema actress, even when playing the part of a girl of most respectable parents, was rendered attractive by touches which in real life were considered by my mother to be suggestive of loose behaviour—her hair was overdecked with flowers, her garments had floral designs, her forehead was bordered with a fringe, and the neck of her jacket fitted loosely. On the screen, however, my mother and aunts watched this enthralled. They liked also the way that love was shown, concentrating on sentimentality rather than sex. There was no kissing or attracting attention to the body, but oh the pining, the sighing, the stamping of feet, the coyness and the moonlight gazing of Burmese cinema heroines. No wonder that aunts who once in a long while accompanied us to an American film, looked all around during the passionate kissing scenes, with scrutiny of our reaction to such displays of what should not be admitted to exist. 546 177. 54

If the Burmese cinema failed to draw the crowd of young English-speaking men and women away from the Hollywood films, Burmese rendering of jazz conquered them completely and gave them no acquaintance with the originals from America and England. There was a body of modern songs in the true Burmese style which, unlike the old classical songs, could be sung with ease by the untrained voice, but despite this Burma did not escape the craze which has grown up in all countries of the Far East for snatching up tunes written in America and England and putting them to words in the native tongue. Still, Burmans of fastidious taste might object to the lack of music in the tunes, rather than to the words of these popular songs, for the Burmese words are never so execrable as the original English compositions; often there is real wit, poetic brevity, and even philosophic comment. The technique was to take the refrain of a Western jazz tune as the repetitive theme, with a slight alteration in the rhythm, and to embroider this extensively with a slapdash quality of Burmese turns of melody. The theme of the Burmese version probably bore no relation to that of the original. For example, the sickly account of a romantic meeting in the Isle of Capri was converted into a satirical skit on the Rangoon fashion of giving garden tea-parties in the English manner. Whereas the Burmese custom at weddings and other celebrations in the country towns was to invite townspeople to a full meal, with the feasting of monks and the distribution of gifts, the Yangonthu had taken to employing the catering services of Western-style restaurants 533 177. 54 574 533 177. 54 569.

to bring chairs, tables, food and attendants for the sum of Re. 1/4 per head. The tune which was written to sing sentimentally of the Isle of Capri now sang, with romping glee, the English names of these delicacies:

Vi-ta-mo, co-co *hnin amyo son myi*
Ham pattie, cream roll *hnin* cold coff-ee,
Columbia *dat pya hnin htè hso myi*,
Plain cake *hnin* Gold Flake *le kyamma wè myi*.
Etc.....

Vitamo, cocoa and all kinds you'll see,
Ham patties, cream rolls and cold coffee
With Columbia record playing merrily,
Plain cake and Gold Flake will I buy for tea.

Expensive things, expensive things of all kinds for eating,
I'll order from a restaurant for this fashion meeting.
Sit up round a table in gathering so hearty,
A very respectable tea-drinking party.

Don't eat of Burmese comestibles,
They are so indigestible.

On the other hand the lilting tune of the Campdown Races was slowed down to sing:

Chit-te thu ko tway hma tha,
Seik pyaw,
Aye da.

Only when you see the loved one,
Heart is happy,
Mind at rest.

Compared to dwellers of country towns, Yangonthu not only went to the cinema oftener, but also read a good deal more, probably in the absence of so many happy-eating-gatherings and charity feasts. There were four daily newspapers in Burmese and a few which appeared bi- or tri-weekly. The daily paper provided a lot of reading matter for the average person; a grandaunt of mine made it a daily institution to sit on her verandah with a bottle of lemonade and the *New Light of Burma* whose 24 pages were filled with international news, home politics, articles on the economic development of the country and attacks on abuses prevalent in social life, exhortations to good behaviour to the younger generation, reports of cases of a scandalous nature, just like a popular daily anywhere in the world. But in Burma there was no distinction such as exists between a paper which tries to keep a dignified

177. Villager .. Short story.
53 Are we seeing aright? .. Attack on prolonged nat-festivals at
204 pagodas, as endangering physical
538 and moral welfare of people, including attack on worldly members of monkhood.

541 Horse-racing in Rangoon was a foreign importation, but nevertheless
177. the stadium was always filled, not only with the fashionable section in an
54 enclosure but also with rows of four-anna spectators who had been col-
369 lected from all the streets of the town by the privately-run Burmese buses which tore along on race days, with two "spares" (spare-men in addition to the driver) hanging out from the back step and shouting to all they passed: "Race-a-ko, Race-a-ko! Race-course, race-course." But in the country the traditional boat racing was still alive. Boat races were held in every village which had a stream or river, as an annual event after the Lenten season. Long narrow canoes built in the village itself were rowed by twenty-two men and put out in rivalry between quarter and quarter, or between one village and another. At Ye the upper street and lower street put out boats bearing names of prowess or aquatic grace. The cheering and betting raged more furious and wild with the manner of the finish: the winning post was a boat in the centre of the stream, equidistant from the tracks of each boat, and across this was laid a hollow cane sticking about three feet out on either side. Through the hollow was thrust the prize *pan*: flower (of victory), a stick with a flag on each end. The winning crew was to seize this flower before it could be called victorious, and thus a dead-heat often sent both crews tumbling into the water as they wrestled for the prize.

525 Burmans are said to have an irrepressible gambling spirit, even when no money is laid on. A stock example quoted by foreigners of the Burman's readiness with a dah in his hot temper, gives as provocation the anger worked up between two men who sit idly in a tea-shop, and for lack of amusement bet on the number of flies which will settle on the sugar bowl. I prefer the story of two street urchins, who saw two monks walking before them, sedately, with downcast eyes and steady pace, as monks should walk. "Look," says one idle urchin, "there are two hpongyis. You look at the one on the right, I'll watch the one the left. I bet you my hpongyi walks faster than your hpongyi." The monks ignore this, but soon begin to hear: "My holiness is going faster!" "No' mind!" Unobtrusively, each hpongyi tries to walk quicker and yet with dignity. The boys get thoroughly excited now. "*My* holiness!', "No, *my* holiness!" Soon the astonished spectators see two hpongyis

in English : "Maung Sett Khaing and Khin Khin Su, I pronounce you 585
man and wife."

All this was a solemn affair; there were no music, no speeches, no outsiders, and no photographs; but by the end of the ceremony murmurs of the activity in the garden floated in. There, a tea party such as the song recounts was being arranged, with an orchestra, Indian waiters, photographers and young men in bright longyis to usher the guests around. After the tea, the wedding guests went to see not so much the presents which were laid out on tables, but the bridal chamber, fitted with richest trappings, and guarded against male intrusion by a gold thread across the door, to break across which the men must pay in gold. All the guests now streamed into this chamber, the women peering here and there, lifting the coverlet of the bed to see if the traditional blankets of velvet were present, prodding the softness of the mattress, estimating the taste of the bride in the choice of fine linen and lace hangings. The custom is for the pair to spend their first days in this chamber in the house of the bride's family, before they go to live in their own house.

Different though the life in Rangoon was from the days in the dis- [369]
tricts, our Buddhist festivals still came round for social gathering and 796
celebration. Being a big town, however, with electricity, crowded streets and cars, the celebrations tended to stand out more as night celebrations. Pagoda festivals at any of the pagodas in the suburbs drew a procession of cars and buses to the night bazaars, anyeins, and the light points twinkling out of the surrounding blackness. But these twinkling lights were multiplied a thousandfold at the lighting-up festivals of which we had two. Thadingyut, or the release from Lenten sobriety, ushers in the springtime of the year : now may all weddings, shinbyus and ear-borings take place, now may fasting days decrease and the full moons of lighting and harvesting and the new year water-play follow before another Lent; the deluge of the rains has ceased at last, the sky has been washed blue and the air blows cool and gentle. At Thadingyut, all houses light up their verandahs and gardens; streets of houses put up pavilions and offer food and stage shows to all the townspeople who ride along in cars, trams and rickshaws to look at the lights from end to end of the town.

During my last Thadingyut in Burma we had a happier idea. Leaving our house with a nominal number of oil-flame dishes burning, we went in a party of twelve to the hill of the Shwe Dagon, to light there one thousand candles as our magnificent deed of merit. We walked up the western approach, a covered way of pillars and stalls selling fragrant flowers, incense sticks and candles for offering; barefooted up steps which we came to sweep at other times in the belief that this good deed brings the doer beauty of long and black hair in the next existence. From a

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

body where it will not be visible. If it is not effectual, there is always open to them the signal afforded by kindly national custom to maidens longing for a mate. They cut off the lappets of hair, the bya-bazan, hanging over the ears, and the significance is the same as the white heather of the language of flowers, "heart for sale." In Rangoon the tattooing of a woman has a special signification, not recognised elsewhere. It means that she wants an Englishman for a husband. Poor thing!

Another very universal kind of tattooing is that with a-hpi se. Almost every schoolboy in the country has a specimen of this on him, for does it not prevent him from feeling the pain when he is caned? No amount of falsified hopes in the experience of friends will persuade him that it may not be effectual in his case, and a flogging is often courted as an immediate test of its efficacy. Pride repels the inquiries of chums as to the results, but the experimenter is usually very well behaved for some time. In the case of older men the a-hpi se acts as a talisman against bullets, sword cuts, and ills of that kind. Allied to this are the thenat hpi, which soldiers and dacoits carry about with them. These are the horns of buffaloes and other animals, which may be plain, but are usually elaborately carved with figures according to fancy. They must be quite solid down to the root. A hollow or flaw of any kind deprives them of their virtue. While the man has such a talisman in his hands he cannot be killed. A monkey is a very favourite image to have carved in this way on a sword or dagger hilt, the reference being to the tale of the Ramayana. Of a similar nature are talismans which are especially used by soldiers and dacoits. These hkaung-beit-set are charmed or consecrated objects let into the flesh under the skin. They are of various kinds. Some are gold, silver, or lead; others curious pebbles, pieces of tortoise-shell, or bits of horn, all of them with incantations of mystic character written on them. Many famed dacoits have long rows and curves of them over the chest, showing in little knobs through the skin. When they get into English prisons, an energetic jailer has been known to cut them out, lest they should be pieces of gold or silver, or perhaps precious stones, with which the turnkeys

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

882 304 and reminiscences of other ceremonies of the kind that they have witnessed. Usually the gold needle is bent round and left in the wound, but poor people sometimes pass a piece of string through and tie it. This is turned round and passed backwards and forwards daily till the sides heal, and then begins the process of enlarging the hole to receive the na-daung, a big tube an inch long and from half an inch to three-quarters in diameter. This takes a very long time, and is less pleasant even than the first boring. Some do it with a gold or thickly gilt metal plate, which is rolled up and passed through the hole. The elasticity of the metal makes it constantly tend to expand, and so the hole is gradually enlarged. A commoner method, however, is by introducing stems of the kaing, or elephant grass. As many of the little stems of the inner blade as will go through are passed in, and daily their number is added to until a considerable width is attained. When kaing grass is not available, little splints of the thekkè kyaung are made use of. This is the ordinary thatch of the poorer sort of houses, and almost universal in the country districts, but forbidden in the large towns on account of its inflammable character. Then, after a time, the nā-kat is brought into use. This is a curious ear-plug, big at both ends, and smaller in the middle, where the two parts screw into one another. The screw is passed through the lobe of the ear, and the other portion is then twisted on. These nā-kat are gradually increased in size, until at last the orifices are large enough to receive the na-daung, the regular ear-cylinders. These are of various make and material, the latter being formerly regulated by the sumptuary laws in independent territory. The royal family, both males and females, had them of gold, richly set with jewels, often a single large brilliant in front, or a diamond surrounded by a ring of emeralds, while the back was a cluster of rubies. The right to wear these was also extended to the higher ministers and their families. Others wear gold, plain hollow tubes, or with the ends filled up with delicate *repoussé* work. Those who cannot afford this content themselves with solid amber plugs, which, when they are without a flaw, are worth three or four pounds sterling apiece. Finally, the poor content themselves with

[369] [342] 301 565

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

hollow pipes of glass, coloured in a variety of tints. The shape is somewhat peculiar, a slight irregular concave, if I may be allowed the expression, the front being a little larger in diameter than the back. Some of the princesses wore very costly na-daung, the diamonds, and especially the rubies, for which Burma is celebrated, being exceedingly fine. The men, except those of high rank, very seldom wear them, unless on exceptional feast days. Women ordinarily put them on whenever they go out. Poor people keep the holes open with a roll of paper or cloth. A *chic* damsel very often courts attention by carrying spare cheroots dangling from her lobes. Elder women who subordinate personal appearance to bodily comforts usually do the same thing on a journey. It secures them a smoke whenever they may want it, and the huge green cheroots are not easily carried in the penetralia of the Burmese female dress, while if they were in the travelling box, they might be abstracted by unscrupulous youngsters.

It is curious to notice how much the custom is falling into disuse in the larger towns with the men. Even among the wealthier classes you seldom see a man wearing a na-daung of the largest size. Those of the thickness of a pencil or a little less are still common, but they too probably will pass out of use shortly. Yet this used to be looked upon as the distinctive mark of Burmese nationality. Probably, nowadays, the tattooing is considered sufficient; while the ear-plugs were certainly inconvenient things, and afforded obvious attractions to robbers. But with the women ear-boring is still universal, and probably will continue so as long as the men go on tattooing, notwithstanding the pain of the process. The na-daung are as characteristic of the Burmese women as the flapping tamein.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

584
538
431

Little presents are exchanged. The *soupirant* brings a gay kerchief with some love-verses written on it, perhaps his own composition, more probably the erotic sighings of the prince in the last play he heard, or cribbed bodily from a song-book for Kālathas (Corinthians, lads of mettle). The girl gives him some green cheroots, rolled by her fair hands, or a brilliant woollen muffler which she has knitted; but there is never any of the kissing and caressing indulged in by more urgent foreign lovers. The girl would look upon any attempts of such a nature as highly indecorous, and no doubt it is quite unsuited to her clothing.

585

When at last everything has been settled — parents' consent obtained, dowry fixed, and a fortunate day and hour pitched upon — the marriage ceremony comes off in the house of the bride's parents. The ritual is very simple and has nothing whatever of a religious character about it; in fact the celibate pôngyis would be grossly scandalised if they were asked to take any part in it. A great feast is prepared at the expense of the bridegroom or his parents. All the relations, friends, and neighbours are invited, and it is the publicity of the thing that is really the main feature of the ceremony. The old custom that the bride and bridegroom should join their right hands together, palm to palm, in the presence of all the assembled guests, and then should eat rice out of the same dish and feed each other with one or two morsels in turtle-dove fashion, has in many cases died out, and the eating and drinking, the talk of the men in the main room of the house and of the women in the inner apartment, is quite enough to solemnise the union. When the newly-married couple retire into the bridal chamber it is sometimes in the larger towns the custom to shower saffron-coloured rice on them, but this, like the entire seclusion in which the happy pair are supposed to pass the next seven days, is very seldom actually carried out.

585
369

In the country villages, however, two ancient customs are still very generally prevalent. The one is to tie a string across the road along which the bridegroom must pass to the house of his intended. He comes in procession with all his friends, carrying the greater portion of the belongings

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

585 369 with which he intends to set up house: a bundle of mats, a long arm-chair, a teak box, mattresses, pillows, besides materials for the feast and presents for the bride. The people who have put up the string — called the gold or silver cord—usually young men intent on a jollification of their own, stop the happy man, and threaten to break the string with a curse on the married couple unless some money is given them. It is simple extortion, and English district officers sometimes forbid it. Nevertheless the speculation is usually successful. I suppose no one feels very niggardly on his marriage day.

585 The other custom is much more singular, more ancient, and infinitely more disagreeable. On the night of the marriage a band of the young bachelors of the place come and shower stones and sticks on the roof of the house where the happy couple are, keeping up sometimes such a sustained battery that the thatch or wooden shingles suffer materially, while the furniture and even the newly-wedded couple occasionally do not escape injury. In Lower Burma the lads are usually bought off with a sum of money, and where the officials do not interfere to prevent it, the custom has degenerated into a system of extortion. Not a few lawsuits have sprung out of such sieges. The money paid in toll to this horseplay goes by the name of ké-bo, and is supposed to be devoted by the receivers to making offerings at the pagoda, but the young men nowadays use it shamelessly for their own entertainment. In Upper Burma the 585 114 blackmail is never demanded, and consequently Father San Germano was puzzled to conceive any reason for the extraordinary practice. Captain Forbes seeing the payment to procure relief, believed that extortion was the sole origin as well as object of the performance. But the learned in Burmese folk-lore assign it a much higher and more estimable beginning. When, after the world was formed, it was first peopled from the superior heavens of the Byammās, of the nine that remained behind, weighed down by the gross earthly food they had eaten, five gradually became men and four women. When these Byammā-gyi ko-yauk, these nine great ancestors of the Burmese and of all mankind, had gradually degenerated, through the substitution of Pada-

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

342 addition to this a mi-kat stands beside it. This is a broad
731 griddle, or flapper kind of thing, and its object is to beat out
355 the flame which may be caused by a spark lighting on the roof. In addition to this, in many parts of the country, pots full of water are always kept in readiness on the tops of the houses, so that when the hour of danger comes, the householder may douse his roof, and so do the best for himself. In Mandalay, under native rule, some of the pa-gwets, and other outcasts, patrolled the streets all night, to watch for and prevent fires as much as possible.

[368]

342 Another kind of roofing is wā-kat, a sort of flat tile-like construction, six feet long by two feet broad, made of coarse bamboo matting. Bamboos split in half down the centre, and with the knots smoothed away, are also used. They are placed close together, with the hollow side upwards, extending all the way down from the ridge to the eaves, and over these again are placed others with the rounded side up, the whole presenting rather a curious appearance, but making a very serviceable roof and not nearly so dangerous as the leaf or grass thatching. The leaves of other trees are also occasionally used, but the simplicity and cheapness of the dani roof make it by far the most prevalent in the delta, as grass is elsewhere, notwithstanding its danger. In Rangoon and Maulmein, shingles, that is, small wooden slabs like slates, are being very generally introduced.

In the better class of houses the floors are made of planking, but poorer people have nothing better than a series of whole or split bamboos laid side by side on the cross-beams and tied down with rattans. This is not very pleasant to walk on, and has the further disadvantage of being anything but cleanly, for the spaces between the bamboos offer an irresistible temptation to drop all litter and garbage on to the ground immediately underneath the house, and were it not for the pariah dogs the sanitary condition of the place would soon be very bad.

[565]

352 The house is thus simple enough in its character, but
177.35 the furniture is still more so. Intercourse with the English
369 has indeed brought many Burmans to indulge in English luxuries, and in many houses in Rangoon and the larger district towns, chandeliers, bookcases, pictures, and even

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

352
177.35
369

statuary are to be seen, besides abundance of chairs and tables, and occasionally bedsteads, while clocks, kerosine lamps, looking-glasses, and lounge chairs are universal. But it is very different in the village houses. There is practically no furniture at all there, for a chair is of no use to a jungle Burman, and without chairs tables are equally useless. Consequently all that is to be seen in a village house is the goodman's box, and a few woven mats and hard bamboo pillows to sleep on. Cots are not used, for one of the Ten Precepts, to be kept on duty-days, is that one must not sleep on a high place. The only furnishings visible are the mats rolled up during the day with the rugs or blankets which serve for bedding. The mats themselves are probably home-made, manufactured from fine strips of bamboo, the best being those with the polished silicious surface outside, which stand any amount of work. Softer, finer articles are made from the skin of the theng, a species of rush, which takes a black dye, and is often worked into patterns, but no one has anything more elaborate, and indeed nothing better could be wished for. A cooler bed could not easily be found. In the country, also, the cooking place during the rains is in the house. During the fine weather culinary operations are carried on in the open air, behind the premises. The cooking range is nothing more than a box, two or three feet square, and six inches deep, filled up with earth or ashes, and on the top of this the wood used as fuel is piled. The cooking utensils and the dining service are equally simple. The former consists of nothing further than two or three earthen pots with lids to them, and a wooden spurtle to stir the contents with. Close at hand is a jar full of water, with a ladle—half a cocoa-nut with a handle through it. These are all the kitchen appliances. In place of table there is a huge round dish of lacquered wood, called a byat. These byats are sometimes as much as three feet and more in diameter, and on them is heaped up in a gigantic pile the rice, while the curry is served in little bowls disposed round about. A young couple have, therefore, no ruinous expenses when they set up house. The inventory of effects necessarily is soon made.

252
415

Outside the house there is not much more to notice.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 of the fundamental precepts, and are not so ludicrous as some unbelievers would make out, except for the fact that they are set down so precisely when they might have been left to the imagination.

A monk must not build a monastery for himself without the aid of a benefactor. If his piety and talents are not such as to induce a layman to build a kyaung for him, let him patiently remain in the house into which he was ordained. He must see that the foundations of a monastery are not laid in a place where there are many insects or worms, which would thus be killed.

792 779

For a similar reason he must not dig himself, except in a sandy place, where there can be no animal life. Neither must he spit, nor do anything of that kind on green grass, nor in fresh water, nor is he allowed to climb trees. There was a discussion in the Lord Buddha's time as to whether vegetation could be regarded as anywhere in the ladder of existence. Shin Gautama, on being asked, said it could not. Still trees and grass must not be destroyed, for they support life in other creatures. A yahan may not drive in a carriage or ride a pony. He must not travel in the same boat or remain under the same roof with a woman, or even with a female animal. When he walks abroad he must neither walk fast nor dawdle and lounge about the streets. He must allow no woman to wash or clean his robes, nor eat food cooked by female hands, if he can get any other; if a woman offers rice in her hand, he may take but not eat it. He must not look into a brother's thabeit, as suggesting that he does not receive much alms. He must not eat his food to the last mouthful, and must avoid highly-seasoned dishes as tending to heat the blood.

792

792 554

In return for their self-denial the pyin-sin are bountifully honoured by the people, from the sovereign on the throne, who vacates his seat for the thā-thanā-baing, to the beggar in the street who prostrates himself in the dust when the yahan passes by. In the country villages all make obeisance when the mendicant passes, and the women kneel down on each side of the road. Such outward marks of respect are not usual in the larger towns, but there is no lack of veneration, and all make way for the monk when he walks abroad.

● [369]

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

before, however steadily they lay on their mats. The offerings are eaten next morning, and it is greatly to be feared that there are many abstentions from the morning's round of alms-begging. Such dissipation must scatter to the winds any merit acquired by diligent piety and meditation in the long weeks of Lent. It is only to be seen in Rangoon and a few other places where many foreigners congregate. The description is from the "country mouse" point of view.

In country towns, revels of this kind are never seen, and even in Mandalay, though there are festivities in abundance, the monasteries are never invaded in this scandalous way. The difference is that between the primitive Buddhist and the highly sophisticated latitudinarian. A more harmless and decidedly prettier custom is the illumination, called taungpyi pwè, of the pagodas and the town. In Rangoon a very fine effect is produced by hanging the Sule Pagoda, in Fytche Square, all round with Chinese lanterns, from the base up to the top of the thabeit-hmauk, where the body of the shrine begins to narrow into the spire. The rings of coloured light narrowing upwards in a veritable pyramid of fire, produce one of the finest sights of the kind to be seen in the country. The street lamps, however, somewhat handicap the simple means of illumination open to the inhabitants, and to see the illumination of a town at its best one must go to a place where there are no street lamps. There all the pagodas and many of the private houses are lighted up, and the contrast to the ordinary gloom is startling. Candles are placed on posts at intervals of ten paces in every street, and the sè-eing gaungs have very plain-worded instructions as to what will happen to them if any of the lights in front of the ten houses of which they have charge go out. Mandalay Hill at such a time was a fine sight and still is, though it is no more a royal town. The two covered ways which lead up the steep uneven sides to the pagoda and the richly gilt Gautama on the top, look like streams of flame, or fiery serpents from the haunted nat-taung, under the shade of the Shan hills. But the monasteries which cluster close in to the foot of the sacred hill are all as dark and still as on any night in the middle of the Wā. No unseemly orgies are permitted there. In the town, on the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma (Hill Peoples) A
Burmese AP4

Be
● 369
527

Ba
[563]

other hand, all is noise and merriment. Bands of music and dances figure at the corners of all the chief streets, provided by the chief burghers, who take the place formerly occupied by the king himself, or by the ministers under his orders. The capital used to be crowded with umbrella-bearing chiefs and officials, Shan sawbaws, and chieftains of the mountain tribes all come down with their bands of wild followers to do homage to the Lord of the Rising Sun, for the greatest of the kadaw-né, the beg-pardon days, was always immediately after Lent. Having brought their minds into a sedate and tranquil state by the observances of the Wā, it was fitting that men should come and make submission and do obeisance at the golden feet. Mandalay is a very different town now from what it was in royal times, but the old traditions still linger.

[177]

527
776

At the same season there is an illumination on the river. As soon as it is dark the villagers row out into the middle of the stream and set adrift a multitude of little oil-lamps, each fastened to a little float of bamboo or plantain stems. The lamps are simply little earthenware cups filled with oil, and each supplied with a small piece of cotton for a wick. Thousands of them are sent out by a single village, and the sight from a steamer suddenly rounding a bend and coming upon a bank of these little stars of light afloat on the river is very singular. In the distance it looks like a regular sea of flame, and as there is plenty of oil, on the night of the full moon there is a constant succession of these shoals of twinkling lights floating down the whole length of the Irrawaddy from above Bhamaw to China Buckeer, every village sending its contingent.

This ceremony, called ye-hpaung hmyaw thi, or mi-hpaung hmyaw thi, launching water or fire rafts, is in remembrance of a universally honoured payā-ngè, a lesser divinity called Shin Upago, who lives down at the bottom of the river in a kyi-pya-that, a brazen spire, where he zealously keeps the sacred days. In a former existence he carried off the clothes of a bather, and for this mischievous pleasantry is condemned to remain in his present quarters till Arimadeya, the next Buddha, shall come. Then he will be set free, and entering the thenga will become a

?:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

in the river Neritzara, at a place where more than 100,000 Buddhas had bathed, before obtaining the supreme intelligence. Then he divided the nogana into forty-nine mouthfuls, ate it, and mounted the throne, whereon he sat for forty-nine days tasting no food, and combating Mān Nat, the spirit of death and sin. But ere he lapsed into meditation he threw his golden bowl into the river. It ascended the stream swiftly, floated steadily for a short time, and then sank in a whirlpool far down, leagues beyond the earth into the country of the nagās, where it fell against the golden bowls of the three previous Budhs with a clang that resounded throughout the four worlds, and all things worshipped the present Lord:

> King and high Conqueror! thine hour is come.
> This is the night the ages waited for.

This event in the life of Shin Gautama is commemorated in the Sôndawgyi pwè. Sônthi is a sacred word set apart to denote the eating of members of the Holy Assembly, and, in remembrance of Thuzata's historic offering, the mendicants are feasted annually by the pious, with a splendour and profusion far exceeding the ordinary alms poured daily with unstinting hand into the begging-bowl. The date of the feast does not exactly correspond with the original event. According to the chronicle, the Lord Buddha attained the first state of ne'ban in the month of Kasôn, about April, whereas the feast of Tawadeintha, with which the Sôndawgyi is always immediately connected, is celebrated after Lent, at the full moon of Ta'saung-môn in November. The festival is essentially one of the town rather than of the country. Except the New Year's Feast, none of the religious celebrations can be really called universal, and the Sôndawgyi perhaps least of all. Villages and small country towns cannot get together the splendour necessary to distinguish the occasion from the ordinary domestic feasts, or even from the daily almsgiving to the mendicants. It is therefore in a large town like Rangoon, where there is a certain amount of money, and a facility for acquiring or borrowing ornaments and frippery, that the festivities are best seen. There the *fête*—the word is more appropriate

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

When a fire occurred in the Golden City, it was usually a very big one and burned until it could find no more fuel. There were two reasons for this. The most obvious was, of course, that wood huts, with an inflammable roof like thin grass thatch, caught fire with the slightest spark; and there was nothing in the shape of a fire-engine, even in the palace. The second was very characteristic of a despotism, and vastly more disastrous. Immemorial tradition associated a conflagration with a revolution. When an attempt was to be made to seize the throne, the attention of the people and the soldiery was always diverted by incendiary fires. Therefore when a house took fire the people found nearest to it by the night watchmen were always arrested and made responsible for the catastrophe. As a natural consequence, the moment flames burst out, not only the inmates of the house, but all the neighbours took to their heels and ran, without incommoding themselves with even the smallest portion of their property. A few of the royal troops came down after a time and unroofed a house here and there, and perhaps even pulled down some altogether, but their efforts as amateur firemen were usually of the most feeble and futile description, and the flames went on till there was nothing more to burn. Next day the unhappy burnt-out people came back and made for themselves little hovels of bamboo matting among the charred posts till something better could be run up again. The neighbouring quarters contributed something to support them, or they got their meals at the monasteries, and in a few months all traces of the fire had disappeared, the same rickety huts with the old scanty store of wares rose up again, and the scorched leaves fell off the trees and were replaced by fresh green foliage.

The population of Mandalay was a very queer one. Of the Burmans the great majority were soldiers or hangers-on of the various great men about the court. The residuum was composed of a few honest tradesmen and a vast quantity of bad characters, broken agriculturists, gamblers, thieves from Lower Burma, and outlaws from all parts. The number of yellow-robed yahans was extraordinary. King Mindôn used to give alms to five thousand of them daily. The jars of rice were arranged in long rows on a platform erected

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

specially for the purpose, with mountains of bananas, and trays heaped up with ngapi, curries, and condiments of all kinds. Thibaw Min was not so eager for merit, and actually went the length of driving a couple of thousand of the holy men out of the capital. Still even he gave them periodical feasts, and there were at least ten thousand of the religious in the Golden City and its immediate neighbourhood. Besides these there were numerous other nationalities; the Chinaman, smooth-shaven and prosperous as always, whether gaunt and big-boned from Yün-nan and Szuch'uan, or sleek and sturdy from Rangoon and the Straits, defying the most greedy official to rob him of his profits, and drinking his tea and smoking his opium-pipe with supreme composure and good-humour; the bearded Surati with solemn face and Jewish tricks of trade; the Palaung come down from the north with his bamboo rafts laden with pickled tea; the stalwart Shan with baggy blue or white trousers and tattoo marks down to his ankles, journeying in a long caravan with sword-blades and iron-work, and a cavalcade of mountain ponies; the heavy, easy-going Karen; the lithe, treacherous Kachin, bringing presents perhaps from his village, and on his way down spying out villages easy to raid in a night attack; all these, and a host of others, might be seen any day in the Royal City of Gems. There were not a few white men too, even latterly, when evil times fell upon them, and there were not the pickings that were to be had when Mindôn Min was king. But many of them were there sorely against their inclination. Mandalay had become an asylum for insolvent debtors, runaway soldiers and sailors, and unlucky adventurers from British territory, just as Rangoon used to be for India in the old Burman days. There were numbers of French and Italians in government service, as military instructors and superintendents of the various factories; officers who had been cashiered, or disowned by their families, or were in other ways under a cloud. One Count there was, who constituted the scientific branch of the service in himself, manufactured and sold fruit syrups to the captains of steamers, preserved a pocket-handkerchief with a coronet in the corner, and carried his lands in his finger-nails. The old king was shamefully cheated by a variety of speculators, not a few of them Englishmen.

One of the most popular foods of these vendors is mohingha. Rice noodles are made by pounding rice into a flour, mixing it with water, and grinding into a paste between two flat stone slabs. After the excess water has been expressed from this paste, it is pushed through sieves with narrow holes, to form noodles. Once dried, the noodles are cooked and mixed with a curry to make mohingha. 252

A beverage sold regularly by food vendors is molesaun. It is made of sugar, coconut milk and bits of rice noodles, mixed together. The villagers consider this drink very tasty and refreshing. 272

7. Shopkeeping and Middleman Trading. The typical shop in the village consists of nothing more than a few large glass jars containing cigars, matches, candy, soap, and various other articles, set out on the porch in front of a house. The stocks of these are very small and are periodically replenished by purchase in Rangoon. Customers are occasional and sales are very small. 414

Seventeen villagers devote their main activity to what we have called middleman trading. These persons make a living by periodically buying quantities of such goods as second-hand lumber from dismantled dwellings, bamboo, cloth, etc., and selling them in the village and nearby places.

8. Urban Labor. The nineteen individuals listed in Table II as urban laborers are employed in a government medical warehouse in Rangoon. They are unskilled workers who perform such tasks as moving boxes of medical supplies in and out of the establishment and arranging them in the warehouse. These people commute daily between Tadagale and their place of work by bus. 464 369

These are the numerically most significant of the variety of occupations followed by villagers. There are six unemployed persons and fourteen who are not gainfully employed because of old age, ill health, or blindness. The great majority of the married women and unmarried girls are occupied most of the time with domestic housework, looking after small children, and helping with gardening. 463

The whole character of the occupational pattern is shifting and unstable. Individuals move opportunistically from one form of activity to another as circumstances change, in an effort to round out a living. Informants stated that in former times the community was much more agricultural, but that owing to loss of land through indebtedness people had gradually left farming for other occupations. 463 178

Income

In analyzing our data on income, figures for the Indians of Tadagale have been calculated separately. The Indians are occupationally a homogeneous group, all engaged in dairy farming. The range and average of income within this small group is so far above that of the Burmese that a misleading idea of the community's economic structure would be conveyed were the data on the Indians included in a single, overall computation for the village. 434 [563]

The following tables show family incomes.

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

Puberty and Adolescence. The Burmese view, in the village, is that one is an adult when one becomes physiologically mature. Upon reaching pubescence boys as well as girls are referred to by a term which means 'virgin.' The connotation is that the individual has now entered a period of life in which the dangers of temptation are especially great and in which correspondingly greater precautions are necessary. 881

A girl's first menstruation is believed to cleanse her system; frequently, such phenomena as eruption of the skin or sexually delinquent behavior preceding the first menstrual period are regarded as evidence that the 'blood is trying to flow.' Although the idea of uncleanliness is associated with menstruation, there is no segregation of the girl or any particular fear of contamination. So long as she conducts herself with propriety and modesty a girl is free to move in public at this time. 881 841

Ideally, the attainment of puberty is the time for the girl's ear-piercing ceremony, but in actual practice this often takes place as early as her seventh or eighth year — if it occurs at all. There is a tendency for this ceremony to be omitted in Tadagale. Since it is a feast occasion involving considerable expense to her family, the trend is towards holding a single ceremony, at which several girls who are related will have their ears pierced. The initiate is dressed for this occasion in the traditional garb of the Burmese Court, and also wears a spired-helmet type of head dress. The villagers gather at the family house for the event. An elderly woman rubs an anaesthetic plant substance on the girl's ear lobes and pierces them with gold pins. These pins are left in the ears, bent back. Later, if larger holes are desired, rolled leaves may be inserted. The family presents gifts to the assembled guests; often these are conventionalized tokens, such as inscribed cigars or fans. 852

On the same occasion boys of approximately the same age may be initiated into the Buddhist monkhood. 881 792 369 177

Boys' Initiation. For Burmese boys one of the most important events is initiation as a novice into the Buddhist monkhood. The traditional rite of shinbyu continues to be an important part of Burmese culture, in the urban as well as the rural setting. In the towns and cities, of course, it has been affected by the greater contact with western culture; the procession, for example, is likely to take place in automobiles rather than on horseback and on foot. Nevertheless, city-bred as well as rural Burmese feel it is very important for social as well as religious reasons that their sons be initiated; and everywhere the shinbyu involves large expenditures if not great sacrifices, requires the services of many people for its planning and carrying out, and is the occasion par excellence for joyous celebration as well as religious solemnity.

No two shinbyu ceremonies are the same in detail. The circumstances of the sponsoring families, the physical setting, the idiosyncrasies of individual monks all make for variation. Here we shall indicate the main features of the initiation ceremony as observed in Tadagale. 881 792

The ceremony proper is held on the open-sided ground floor of a wooden building, in the upper portion of which the monks and their pupils live. On the south side of this room is a platform raised about three feet above the ground, on which the monks sit during the proceedings. The room is decorated with various hangings, tapestries, and mat curtains; the floor is covered with mats and carpets. Four tables front the platform, on which are placed various

16;Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Such is a great feast at a great pagoda. 796

But whenever I think of a great feast, whenever the growing autumn moon tells me that the end of Lent is drawing nigh, it is not the great feast of the Shwe Dagon, nor of any other famous pagoda that comes into my mind, but something far different.

It was on a frontier long ago that there was the festival that I remember so well. The country there was very far away from all the big towns; the people were not civilized as those of Mandalay or of Rangoon; the pagoda was a very small one. There was no gilding upon it at all, and no shrines were about it; it stood alone, just a little white plastered pagoda, with a few trees near it, on a bare rice-field. There were a few villages about, dotted here and there in the swamp, and the people of these were all that came to our festival. 796 433 436 369

For long before the villagers were preparing for it, saving a little money here, doing a little extra work there, so that they might be able to have presents ready for the monks, so that they might be able to subscribe to the lights, so that they would have a good dress in which they might appear.

The men did a little more work at the fields, bamboo-cutting in the forest, making baskets in the evening, and the women wove. All had to work very hard to have even a little margin; for there, although food—plain rice—was very cheap, all other things were very expensive. It was so far to bring them, and the roads were so bad. I remember that the only European things to be bought there then were matches and tinned milk, and copper money

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

796
433
436
369
796
735
262
796
735
792

was not known. You paid a rupee, and took the change in rice or other commodities.

The excitement of the great day of the full moon began in the morning, about ten o'clock, with the offerings to the monks. Outside the village gate there was a piece of straight road, dry and open, and on each side of this, in rows, were the people with their gifts; mostly they were eatables. You see that it is very difficult to find any variety of things to give a monk; he is very strictly limited in the things he is allowed to receive. Garments, yellow garments, curtains to partition off corners of the monasteries and keep away the draughts, sacred books and eatables—that is nearly all. But eatables allow a very wide range. A monk may accept and eat any food—not drink, of course—provided he eat but the one big meal a day before noon; and so most of the offerings were eatables. Each donor knelt there upon the road with his or her offerings in a tray in front. There was rice cooked in all sorts of shapes, ordinary rice for eating with curry, and the sweet purple rice, cooked in bamboos and coming out in sticks. There were vegetables, too, of very many kinds, and sugar and cakes and oil and honey, and many other such things. There were a few, very few, books, for they are very hard to get, being all in manuscript; and there were one or two tapestry curtains; but there were heaps of flowers. I remember there was one girl whose whole offering was a few orchid sprays, and a little, very little, heap of common rice. She was so poor; her father and mother were dead, and she was not married. It was all she could give. She sat behind

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

562 her; and as her surroundings change, so will she. What she was a thousand years ago I do not care, what she may be a thousand years hence I do not know; it is of what she is to-day that I have tried to know and write.

858 562 871 Children in Burma have, I think, a very good time when they are young. Parentage in Burma has never degenerated into a sort of slavery. It has never been supposed that gaiety and goodness are opposed. And so they grow up little merry naked things, sprawling in the dust of the gardens, sleeping in the sun with their arms round the village [854] dogs, very sedate, very humorous, very rarely crying. Boys and girls when they are babies grow up together, but with the schooldays comes a division. All the boys go to school at the monastery without the walls, and there learn in noisy fashion their arithmetic, letters, and other useful knowledge. But little girls have nowhere to go. They cannot go to the monasteries, these are for boys alone, and the nunneries are very scarce. For twenty monasteries there is not one nunnery. Women do not seem to care to learn to become nuns as men do to become monks. Why this is so I cannot tell, but there is no doubt of the fact. And so there are no schools for girls as there are for boys, and consequently the girls [369] are not well educated as a rule. In great towns there are, of course, regular schools for girls, generally for girls and boys together; but in the villages 562 212 871 these very seldom exist. The girls may learn from their mothers how to read and write, but most of them cannot do so. It is an exception in country places to find a girl who can read, as it is to find

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

443 density of population, the means of communication, and other matters. But a bazaar within reach there must always be, for it is only there that most articles 443 can be bought. The bazaar is usually held in a 347 public building erected for the purpose, and this may vary from a great market built of brick and iron to a small thatched shed. Sometimes, indeed, there is no building at all, merely a space of beaten ground.

443 The great bazaar in Mandalay is one of the sights 369 of the city. The building in which it is held is the property of the municipality, but is leased out. It is a series of enormous sheds, with iron roofs and beaten earth floor. Each trade has a shed or sheds to itself. There is a place for rice-sellers, for butchers, for vegetable-sellers, for the vendors of silks, of cottons, of sugar and spices, of firewood, of jars, of [563] fish. The butchers are all natives of India. I have [562] explained elsewhere why this should be. The firewood-sellers will mostly be men, as will also the large rice-merchants, but nearly all the rest are women.

You will find the sellers of spices, fruit, vegetables, and other such matters seated in long rows, on mats placed upon the ground. Each will have a square of space allotted, perhaps six feet square, and there she will sit with her merchandise in a basket or baskets before her. For each square they will pay the lessee a halfpenny for the day, which is only three hours or so. The time to go is in the morning from six till eight, for that is the busy time. Later on all the stalls will be closed, but in the early morning the market is thronged. Every house-

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

holder is then buying his or her provisions for the day, and the people crowd in thousands round the sellers. Everyone is bargaining and chaffing and laughing, both buyers and sellers; but both are very keen, too, on business.

The cloth and silk sellers, the large rice-merchants, and a few other traders, cannot carry on business sitting on a mat, nor can they carry their wares to and fro every day in a basket. For such there are separate buildings or separate aisles, with wooden stalls, on either side of a gangway. The wooden floor of the stalls is raised two to three feet, so that the buyer, standing on the ground, is about on a level with the seller sitting in the stall. The stall will be about eight feet by ten, and each has at the back a strong lock-up cupboard or wardrobe, where the wares are shut at night; but in the day they will be taken out and arranged daintily about the girl-seller. Home-made silks are the staple—silks in checks of pink and white, of yellow and orange, of indigo and dark red. Some are embroidered in silk, in silver, or in gold; some are plain. All are thick and rich, none are glazed, and none are gaudy. There will also be silks from Bangkok, which are of two colours—purple shot with red, and orange shot with red, both very beautiful. All the silks are woven the size of the dress: for men, about twenty-eight feet long and twenty inches broad; and for women, about five feet long and much broader. Thus, there is no cutting off the piece. The anas, too, which are the bottom pieces for a woman's dress, are woven the proper size. There will probably, too, be piles of showy cambric jackets and

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

443 gauzy silk handkerchiefs; but often these are sold
286 at separate stalls.

But prettier than the silks are the sellers, for these are nearly all girls and women, sweet and fresh in their white jackets, with flowers in their hair. And they are all delighted to talk to you and show you their goods, even if you do not buy; and they will take a compliment sedately, as a girl should, and they will probably charge you an extra rupee for it when you come to pay for your purchases. So it is never wise for a man, unless he have a heart of stone,
443 to go marketing for silks. He should always ask a
562 lady friend to go with him and do the bargaining, and he will lose no courtesy thereby, for these women know how to be courteous to fellow-women as well as to fellow-men.

443 In the provincial bazaars it is much the same.
●369 There may be a few travelling merchants from
438 Rangoon or Mandalay, most of whom are men;
442 but nearly all the retailers are women. Indeed, speaking broadly, it may be said that the retail trade of the country is in the hands of the women, and they nearly all trade on their own account. Just as the men farm their own land, the women own their businesses. They are not saleswomen for others, but traders on their own account; and with the exception of the silk and cloth branches of the trade, it does not interfere with home-life. The bazaar lasts but three hours, and a woman has ample time for her home duties when her daily visit to the bazaar is over; she is never kept away all day in shops and factories.

Her home-life is always the centre of her life;

413
722
369

Comparison of Work in Pathwe and Camp

In his role as a refugee U Myaing is reduced from an expanding position as a fisherman in a cooperative enterprise to a transient labourer. He lives for the day of return to his village, and lacks the desire and know-how to adapt to a successful career in his new environment. His pattern of work as a labourer has not been broken he is simply doing a different kind of work. But it is now unskilled and lacks promise of development. Similarly, his wife's role has not appreciably changed: she continues to make mats as in the village in hard times; works as a coolie as a substitute for her contributions in processing fish. The eldest daughter has adapted to an urban trade that of cigar rolling, but is well within the pattern of juvenile work carried on in the village at this time. If the family remained in Rangoon, the children would of course adapt completely to the urban work pattern - but is seems improbable that the parents would.

465
722
369
464

The reduction in income from work can be seen in the following table:

Estimate of Family Average Income per year

Family Work	Income in Pathwe	Income in Camp
Selling Fish Products	1,500	
Mat making	150	600
Cattle Loening	200	
Day Labour		1,032
Miscellaneous (gathering, etc.)	900	
Daughter Ma Yin Shwe		240
Government Help		372
Total	2,750	2,144

The purchasing power of the rupee in Camp is not en toto appreciably different from that of Pathwe. The security of Pathwe work was not so much in the surplus which results, but rather in the guaranteed sources of work. Life was easy and a living to be had for the taking. In camp existence is hand to mouth with no real security. U Myaing expresses this when asked about his knowledge of world affairs: "We don't know whether the world situation has improved or not. We get bits of information, but our main worry is work - and how to provide

sufficient food for myself and my family." Yet, it is significant that he[1] manifests no anxiety symtoms, and appears happy and carefree. This suggests that despite the fact that he is presented with insecurity he does not react to it with tensions that have nervous manifestations. The sense of insecurity does not seem to be in his pattern of living, consequently his response is ill-defined.

The points of difference that U Myaing especially emphasized were:-

1. A few weeks of intensive work in Pathwe would get him more than a whole year of salary working in Rangoon.

2. His income in Rangoon is stabilized at a low level. In Pathwe he might make 3 or 4 times his average income from fish products in a good year. On bad years he might just break even. But this did not affect his everyday living quality - since his food was for the most part gathered (fish, fruits etc.) or secured from the cattle loan (baskets of rice).

3. If he was sick in Pathwe his standard of living was not threatened. He made his cash in a short time and had ample leisure for resting. In Rangoon if he does not work he does not eat.

4. In Pathwe he usually had a surplus of 1000 to 1500 rupees on hand during a year. To be lent out (free of interest) to friends and relatives or (usually) invested in fish or family accoutrement. Now he lives from hand to mouth.

5. The loss of comfort and ease is severely felt by the adults. In Rangoon he works to stay alive, in Pathwe, to enjoy a full life.

[1 i.e., U Myaing -- ANALYST]

pagodas and those throughout the country are descendants of the pagoda slaves.

Beggars are rated below the pagoda slaves - but, because of the Buddhist merit associated with giving do well for themselves. The beggars live in communities on the outskirts of the town often in cemetaries. They are thought to exhume the dead to get the coins placed in the mouth of the deceased to ensure expenses on his journey to heaven. The wood of the coffin is believed to be used in constructing their huts. Professional undertakers or morticians are regarded with horror since they like the beggars, make their living from the dead. The functions of burial are performed gratis by the entire village. A story is currently going round the University dormitories telling of an immensely wealthy Burmese coffin maker in Rangoon who has offered riches to the young man who will marry his beautiful daughter. When the future seems blank the students' friend advises "Hey, why don't you go and marry the coffin maker's daughter?" It seems that the money would scarcely compensate for the social discrimation. The extent to which the occupation classes are rigid in marriage and other social exchanges is an interesting problem.

A young man is obliged to remain within the occupation class of his family or to rise to greater heights. He is advised at an early age to "be simple, aim high, and tell the truth." When children play at dacoits (thieves) of other "low class" games their parents object to their low aspirations and advise them to play nobles and ministers. One would feel justified in remaining idle rather than accept a position below that of his birth. It is better to accept a clerks job at a low salary than an artisans at a high salary. On the other hand those born into lower status occupation groups tend to be satisfied with their state as a condition of birth. In Rangoon, however, even the haskers may have ambitions to achieve fame and fortune. The opportunities for social mobility is greater in the towns and cities but difinitely restricted in the villages.

Apprenticeship to trades begins at the age of 12 to 14 years, and usually lasts for several years. Ordinarily the youth is attached to the shop of a relative where he lives and is payed a subsistence wage while learning. The key to high positions lies in education in

length) draped over one shoulder. The PUNA, part of the scarf, still draped, is placed on front of the worshipping woman for her head and hands as she bows. The beads, a string about 2 feet long made of black lacquer or red or white beads about ½ inch in diametre are called SHIK-PA-HEE (count-beads). They are worn about the neck when not in use, and are "counted" by the fingers of one hand. Each bead, thus counted calls to the worshipper's mind a vision of Buddha as she says ARA HAHN (God) in a low voice. While in this dress women do not decorate their hair with flowers or wear jewelry or cosmetiques as such would be unseemly. 792 291 293 [788]

The older men and other religious men (who are gathering alms as members of Buddhist lay societies) wear a loose white robe over a white jacket, white head band, praying bead necklace, and a chocolate coloured scarf draped over one shoulder. The general public must wear their very best clothes for religious festivals but the women do not use cosmetiques. "Rangoon Sabbath" is the term applied to the less strict observations of the town people who may appear with a little THANAKA or other cosmetiques. The marriage dress of the bride is an older form of costume involving use of a long split skirt with cut-flaring jackets. 888 779 575 291 [369] ● [779] [292] [585]

The hair styles are important and denote age and sex. Children of both sexes wear their hair in a knot at the top of the head with a fringe of short hair like a bowl below. The older men's style was long hair knotted on one side in the back of the head; except in villages this has been superceded by the western short crop ranging from a long "Pompador" to short "crew cuts" - the latter being rarer and more modern. Old men wear very short cropped hair or are shaven - as the Pongyis and nuns. Maidens wear their hair in elaborately woven tresses - earlier on top of the head in a disc-shorl - now in chain braids at the back of the head. False switches of hair are commonly used. Flowers are used as decoration on all occasions. The usual style for married ladies is a knot at the back of the head wound around a rectangular comb of wood, (common) tortoise shell, ivory or gold. Older and married women sometimes appear in an ancient ceremonial style consisting of the hair wrapped around a fiber cylinder 302 177 369

302
177
369
291
562
183

on top of the head. Scented hair oil is used by both sexes on special occasions.

The HTAMEIN is regarded as "unworthy" for a man to touch. A severe insult is for a wife to request her husband to bring her HTAMEIN or to wash it. Drying HTAMEINS in the front of the house is never allowed; and it is strictly forbidden for this garment to touch any pongyi utensils. Parents instruct their boys never to pass under the strings of a line of which HTAMEINS are drying as such is thought to take away the masculine powers, and render the tattooed charms ineffective. Men and women's clothes are washed and stored separately.

[593]

When a son neglects his mother after marriage she will complain with rage that he has not come out of the HTAMEIN and is under the HTAMEIN government of his wife.

291
841

Women usually wear solid black HTAMEINS during menstruation. Boys, in jest, inform one of their companions that he may now become serious when the girl of his choice appears in a black dress for the first time.

Slippers of both sexes are regarded as "dirty" objects and are left outside of the houses. They are strictly prohibited in pagoda enclosures and land. When a girl is angry at a teasing boy (or quarreling with a woman) she will threaten to slap his face with her sandal. This is a double insult since the head is regarded as a particularly sacred part of the body. Barbers must ask permission and apologise for touching the heads of their customers.

291
177
554

Western clothing has a higher status than Burmese clothing in certain situations and on certain occasions especially where western people are present in suits. However, for most occasions, everyday or special, the Burmese costume is preferred. When abroad the Burmese men usually wear western garb. The wearer of western clothes

[186]

is often open to the taunt that he is "Bo Gyi (term for Englishmen) made in Burma". There is a strong feeling in all cases to be "properly" dressed and not to stand out from the rest of the group. This tendency is stronger in men than women who with their jewels and fine silks attempt to rival each other in a contest for social position.

[562]

Burmese girl students who go abroad almost invariably wear their native costumes.

775
789

the ghost who must then render services as requested. "To rear ghosts is like keeping a cobra in the pocket" indicates the delicate relationship between captive ghost and master. An individual with a grudge against another for real or imaginal offenses will frequently secure the services of an influence master and his "pet ghost". When the victim feels the effects, as in cases of sudden illnesses such as appendicitis, heart trouble, or fainting spells, his family contacts another influence master (upper root type) to, by incantations, cast out the ghost from the victim. This results in a secret contest of magic between the influence masters involved.

791
789
606

In actual practice no influence masters admit to rearing ghosts and the first-cause aggressor does not indentify himself as such. Influence masters play an important part in differences between affinal families. In this case the mother-in-law constantly competes with her son's wife for the attentions of the son. The mother will notice the lack of attentions, or monetary support of the son and his corresponding infatuation for his wife. She will claim that the wife is exercising magical control (usually through food) on the son. An influence master is applied to in order to control this evil influence by incantations, medicine, candles, and always an ingredient of money. When the wife's family understands what is happening they will also secure the help of another specialist to counteract the influence. The son is thus torn between the two forces. He is at first oblivious to this but later becomes uneasy in mind. If the strain on the son is too severe the mother may give in and the difference resolved on her part - whereupon the son continues in his former course. Often he will berate both groups saying " I am only normal, you are foolish to involve yourselves in a dispute". Sometimes the mother wins and the son thanks her for intervening and saving him. Another common situation is where a wife seeks to control the influence of another woman on her husband (when he philanders). In this case the forces are directed against the woman, who is to blame, and not the man.

●369
777
789

In the town centers the decline in one's fortunes is often blamed on the evil influence of one's rival. It is said that administrative

families in Rangoon have worries of this kind - resolved by arrange-
ments with influence masters - usually undertaken by the wives of the
families. Ordinarily, violence is not premeditated but spun-of-the-
moment actions based on passions. If ill-feelin- grows gradually it
is best handled through the influence masters. The function of this
system in the village is to avoid open conflict that might prove dis-
astrous to the solidarity of the community (as say feuding families
in open warfare).

369 ●
777
789
[621]
[682]

to 2½. Mangoes in season cost four annas for ten. In camp they have eaten mangoes twice in six months, six for one eating, Re. 1/- for six. 263 435

MAYAN-THEE-ANBE (mariam-fruit-ripe: Bouea burmanica, Griff.) are eaten in the afternoons, with salt. Similarly with unripe ones. They are also eaten with rice and NGAPI YE. In Pathwe about ten fruits were eaten almost daily when in season. 178

NGA PYAW-THEE (banana-fruit: Musa paradisiaca, Linn, Sub-sp, sapientum, K. Schum). Bananas are sometimes eaten with rice during the main meals but usually by themselves. In Pathwe one bunch a day containing 13 bananas and costing three annas were eaten during four or five times a month. In camp the same bunch costs four annas and bananas are eaten five times a month.

THAGYAR-LON (sugar-ball) or sweets, and CHO-CHIN (sweet-sour) are bought. Ma Aye Myaing has never seen these being made and hence does not know the process of manufacture. The THAGYAR-LON are round sweets also but are shaped like small orange pods and weighing about six to the tical. They are eaten only in camp. The consumption of sweets is limited to the youngest. She gets 8 THAGYAR-LONS a month at one anna for two and two for an eating; and 18 CHO-CHIN a month at an anna for six and six for one eating.

Ma Aye Myaing gave the following data on the period of the year 262

when the foods used by the family are available.

Fish is obtained from the fishery in Pathwe from the month of Tawthalin to the month of Pyatho. From the other places in the river, fish was obtained from Tabodwe month to the months of Kason and Nayon. The varieties of fish remain the same in both fishing areas. Shrimps are plentiful in Pyatho month and lobsters in Tasaungmon and Nadaw.

KALA-BE (shell): In common with a great number of peas and beans, KALA BE appears about the month of Tabaung. However, since these are not very perishable, they can be kept in stock for the whole year and made available in any month.

KAYAN-THEE (brinjal): The brinjal plant starts to bear fruit in the month of Pyatho and continues to Kason and Nayon. In Tawthalin and Thadingyut, brinjal fruit was brought to Pathwe from other villages from the fields not on the river banks. Here in Rangoon they notice that brinjal fruit is available all year round.

PE-LINBOKE-THEE (snake beans) were available during the months of Kason, Nayon, Waso, Wagaung, Tawthalin and Thadingyut.

In Rangoon many of the plants and vegetables that were cultivated only seasonally back in Pathwe and the other district villages, are cultivated all the year round. The ready market in Rangoon encourages the districts lying just outside Rangoon to produce whatever plants they can and send them to town. [369]● [241]

PE THEE (beans): These appeared in Pathwe for 9 months in the year. The first period is from Tasaungmon to Tagu, and the second from Waso to Thadingyut inclusive. In Rangoon this is available all year round.

HSAN (rice): During the months of Kason and Nayon the paddy grains are sown in the nurseries, and the seedlings are then transplanted to the fields during Waso and Wagaung. In other fields where no transplanting is carried on, the seeds are sown broadcast in Kason and Nayon. There are some species of paddy grain that ripen earlier than the rest. However, from the point of view of the consumer, rice is available all the year round. [243]

NGANYIN-THEE (chillies): The seeds are planted during Waso, Wagaung and Tawthalin and transplanted during Tasaungmon. The chillies

during the months of Waso andWagaung. Mangoes can be preserved in the form of pickle or of salted mangoes. In Rangoon, ripe mangoes can be obtained all year round since some are laid by in cold storage, but they are very expensive out of season and cost about three rupees each. 262 [369] [251]

MAYAN THEE AHNE (ripe marians) appear during the months of Tabaung, Tagu, Kason and Nayon. In Nayon month the output of marian fruit lessens.

Consumption of NGAPI YE: NGAPI YE is available all the year round. In Pantanaw it was eaten every day for both meals of the day. Ten ticals of NGAPI YE lasted the family four meals. In camp it is consumed only occasionally - about four days in the month. Two and one half ticals are taken with each meal and this would add up to twenty ticals for the eight meals in the month.

Consumption of firewood: If all the firewood needed by the family in camp had to be bought, the consumption of firewood per month in the camp would amount to 200 pieces of Kanazoe wood at the rate of Rs. 4/- per 100 pieces. About 3 months ago they found that they did not need to buy any firewood at all as they could gather a sufficient amount of brushwood to serve in its place; but now none of the members of the family remain free to go in search of brushwood and all their requirements have to be bought. 313

In Pantanaw, their needs of firewood for cooking were filled by three huge Koko trees which they owned. This was also supplemented by the wood that they had to buy for processing the fish. Three tons of firewood would last 1½ or 2 months, costing Rs. 25/- per ton. The firewood for cooking did not cost anything beyond the two or three rupees that had to be paid to the person who cut down the branches.

Consumption of PAUK PAUK PYIN: This is not found in Rangoon at all. In Pantanaw it was eaten at charities, particularly the Waso month charity. Each member of the family ate about 10 ticals each, and 40 or 50 ticals were needed for all. This was eaten only once a year and even then not necessarily every year. 262 [796]

KAYE KAYAR is eaten in camp only about once a year. This is the Rangoon equivalent of PAUK PAUK PYIN. KAYE KAYAR is different in having no oil in it. One anna's worth weighs five ticals and six or seven people eat an anna's worth each at one eating.

In Pantanaw bread was sometimes eaten at SHIN PYUS (novitiation ceremonies). MON-HIN-GA was eaten at the beginning of the Buddhist lent, when PAUK PAUK PHIN, MON KYAR YOE and MON SEIN BAUNG were also eaten sometimes. KAUK HNYIN BAUNG was eaten at this time and also at U Myaing's daughter's naming ceremony. GYIN THOKE, LAPHET and tea were served during novitiation ceremonies, and Mandalay HTO MOK was eaten during the naming ceremony. Sweet tea was also served during marriage ceremonies. Rice and curries were eaten at some of the bigger festivals. KAUK HNYIN was prepared for almost every ceremony or festival. [796]

In Rangoon, U Myaing had MON HIN GA and sweet tea on the full moon of Tazaungmon from a charity in the THAYET-TAW KYAUNG-TAIK. He also had some MON-HIN-GA not long ago at a head washing ceremony for a child. There are no charities held in the camp enclosure. [796]

621
641 remaining huts. They have lists of the people in their charge. Maung Hyunt and Aung Gyi are under the school-master, who is the most important and influential man of all. These people have to see to the DHANI thatch roof, the bamboo, etc., and if there are any repairs needed they get together, estimate the cost , and then go to the government authorities. U Myaing does not know which office they go to.

621
792 The phongyis resident in the camp do not participate in the secular life of the camp, beyond giving the SILAS and coming occasionally for HSOON. In Pathwe village there were small boys whom they taught - thirty or forty of them, but in camp they do not help to educate the young. People go to these phongyis in camp on holy days, to take the SILAS. They do not even preach to the laity. This U Myaing thinks to be due to the fact that they do not know how to, being themselves refugees from country villages.

796 On the 8th and 15th day of the waxing moon and the 8th and 15th day of the waning moon, the four holy days of the month, Daw Aw Zar goes to the Shwe Dagon to say her prayers. U Myaing cannot do likewise because he has to go to work.

641
621 U Myaing has very little dealing with the government. They do not come for taxes, and in fact even have to provide the refugees with items of food and apparel. The people in the camp are not members of a closely knit organisation. They are made up of workers and families all thrown together by the exigencies of the political situation. The three mentioned above are the only ones in the whole camp. who have charge of the camp welfare. They take the responsibility for disposing of the bucket sewage and the dirt accumulated in and around the camp. They arrange for government sweepers to come for these. There have been no fire drills or any such exercise held in the camp.

●369
541 In Rangoon the family has few entertainments. There was once a government film show screened in the camp, and the other night Ma Khin Kyein went with some friends to a nearby pagoda to see a lantern slide show of Buddha's Relics. They have never seen a modern Burmese play or PYEIKT. As Daw Aw Zar expressed it, "How can we go and see one when the charge for admission is a rupee

[435] for an adult and 8 annas for a child."

782 the well being of his family, for riches and the absence of privation and penury. He desires Nirvana. He prays that all the creatures inhabiting the 36 worlds may be infused with love for each other. [775] "Even if I change existence, may I be born into a better existence. It would not be a better existence if I were to become a cat or some other animal."

782 776 Daw Aw Zar prays that she may meet with good people and not meet up with enemies; that she may be enabled to meet the high-minded and avoid wicked people. Ma Aye Myaing's prayers are about the same as Daw Aw Zar, but she adds that she may be able to give charities liberally in this and successive existences.

In Pantanaw U Myaing prayed for the same things that he prays for now in camp. There he took life and had to expiate the demerit acquired from taking the lives of fish, with the merit accumulated through charities and other meritorious acts. He took some consolation in the fact that he did not take part personally in the killing itself but only gave directions, and even when, in those years in which he had to buy live fish from the IH workers, the fish poured into his boat died of their own accord and so no blame could be attached to him. He did not beat them to death. He believes that although fishermen have a bad reputation as people who take lives, that does not mean that the one necessarily implies the other. However, he concedes that he may be blamed for directing the killing to take place. He was not sure, and so he goes ahead with his charities.

Observations of Aspects of Life in Rangoon.

●369 776 In Patheo they had pigs killed occasionally for pork but it did not greatly disturb him. The mass slaughter of pigs in Rangoon spelled him as being a very gruesome affair. Fifty to sixty animals were lined up in the slaughter house on the occasion he witnessed such a killing. The slaughterers were Chinese and they took the squealing pigs, despatched them and handed them over to others who dip them in boiling water to clean off the hair, and this happened even if the pigs were not quite dead as yet. U Myaing thinks they must be getting a lot of demerit.

must be getting a lot of deceit.

He then had to say something about the women's clothes in Rangoon. In Pathee the girls did not dare to dress in these fashions. "I do not even dare to look at some of them." In Pathee village there were no such things as girls with short sleeves, etc. Only the girls who had been to town affected them. The majority were HIN-GYIS of thick material. In Rangoon one sometimes has the feeling that one is looking at little dolls".

369 ●
291
562

U Myaing considers that there is a greater variety of means of earning money here. In Pathee there were only a few ways in which one could earn money and these were almost wholly confined to working fish and paddy and their by products. There was of course frequent interchange of goods with people from other villages inland and with boats from Upper Burma.

U Myaing has been in Rangoon before and had seen the electric tramway and things that the others in the family had not seen before, but even he has seen comparatively little. The others have not seen so many different kinds of automobiles, they have never seen the trains, rickshaws, pony-carts etc.

In the matter of clothing, they find a difference between Pathee and Rangoon even in hair styles and in making up the face. U Myaing thinks that the people in Rangoon have inverted the order of things. According to him, a man can stay undressed except for a longyi and it can remain acceptable, while girls must wear clothing of thick material. This was the case in Pathee, whereas in Rangoon men wear thick clothing and women wear garments made out of sheer material.

The life of Rangoon is beginning to influence girls who come from the villages, and they are beginning to imitate their sisters in town in the use of short sleeved jackets, lipstick and "saves". In Pathee the usual facial make up is to daub the whole face with THANAT-KHA cream and leave it to dry. In Rangoon THANAT-KHA is used only as a powder base. Even Ma Aye Myaing has now a jacket which has sleeves that are elbow long.

[301]

In Rangoon, the men's garments are of better quality. In Pathee during the hot season the men stayed without any shirts on,

369 and women too did the same, and wore their HTAMEINS breast high.
291 Here except for the refugees, he does not see much of this except when
562 people are bathing in the public water hydrants. When it is hot the men wear T shirts and the women wear light garments.

369 U Myaing says that the ordinary city dweller cannot do as much
464 hard labour as the average villager. For example, he cannot carry
461 a bag of rice on his shoulders if suddenly called upon to do so.

The workers from Rangoon are much more acute than the workers from the village. They speak and understand English and Hindustani and so get to know of any possible job long before the others. The villagers do not have these advantages, and so have to join work only later and they are placed to work under them.

563 As far as U Myaing is concerned, there is no racial animosity
464 towards Indians and workers of other races. This is due to the fact that there is no racial discrimination on the part of the employers, the first suitable applicant being given the work.

369 He finds that Rangoon has a much more equable climate than
132 Pathwe. In Rangoon it is not as cold asin Pathwe, where in the cold season it was very cold even though they lived in a proper house and kept all the doors and windows shut. He says that they would not be able in Pathwe to live in an open dwelling like they do at present.

369 Their relatives in Rangoon keep to themselves a great deal.
571 They work on their own and earn on their own. In Rangoon each family
602 has only sufficient for itself. We cannot help them financially and neither can they help us much. When we go on a visit they can invite us to join in a meal or to partake of sweet tea, but they would not be able to lend us fifty or a hundred rupees. In Pathwe we could lend each other any amount up till a thousand five hundred rupees and that free of interest. These loans also need to be repaid only when it is convenient to the debtor. It would be inconvenient to have to repay a loan while the money was in the form of goods."

159 U Myaings eldest daughter has returned to the camp because the
369 woman who owns the cheroot rolling business has temporarily closed it
602 down and gone to Pantanaw with goods like onions, prawns and textiles. Since the girl is not sufficiently dexterous to find work elsewhere as

159
369
602
844

as a roller, and as the aunt from whom she is learning embroidery went into confinement quite recently, she has returned home to the camp. When this aunt had her child, Daw Aw Zar had to go and keep her company for a period of twenty days. Ma Aye Myaing made one or two visits to inquire into her progress. The actual delivery was performed not by Daw Aw Zar, but by someone else, a midwife. When Ma Aye Myaing gives birth to her child the other relatives are sure to offer help, especially if she had the baby in her own home. However, there are only about ten families from Pathae in Rangoon and out of that number only two or three will be able to come. There would be no need to ask them to come - they would come of their own accord if they heard the news. At present they live in distant parts of Rangoon town. In Pathae, on an occasion like this everyone comes to ask after the health of the mother and child, even though they may be no relations at all. On the seventh day after birth the house is washed and all visitors to the house are provided with scented water to wash their hair - and it is also sent to those elders who are unble to come. The water is scented with the cream of TAUNG-DAN-GYI, MATHAPYU and KALAMET roots. Enough scented water is provided for about 60 visitors. Most of the visitors are women and girls - very few young men come.

369
511
465

In Rangoon it is very easy to earn two or three rupees in one day as labourers, while in Pathae even the worker who worked at the IWS for a monthly wage was paid only twenty to thirty rupees. But to offset that, the prices in Pathae were very much lower than those in Rangoon. MOAPI workers earn Rs. 10/- a month, and the foreman for the MOAPI workers is paid Rs. 15/- a month. This salary of ten rupees was more than sufficient for buying decent clothing and other necessities. These men had to be fed by their employer. The IW workmen who earned twenty to thirty rupees a month had to find their own food.

574

U Myaing has made some friends among his fellow workers in Rangoon and has visited the house of one of them, but even this was not a social visit, as he went there to enquire about their work.

572 The friendships he[1] has made with other workers do not seem to be
●369 very deep or very lasting. In Pathwe the workers were all friends, and even included his relatives as well. There are not many strangers in Pathwe and even people not connected by blood ties were treated like relatives.

369 "In Rangoon the seller takes a profit on everything we have
426 to buy for food; items like rice, vegetables and fruits. Of course
444 he cannot be blamed, because he has a living to earn too. He gives wage-earners goods on credit, but charges an interest on those goods. In Pathwe U Myaing could get most of the necessary food without having to pay any interest or middleman's profits since he bought straight from the producer. In Rangoon all people who earn monthly wages are the same. They have to take goods on credit. Those who do not earn regular salaries are allowed credit, but they have to undertake to settle accounts by a fixed date.

525 During the TAGU month festival, U Myaing gambled for money.
527 He has gambled to stakes as high as three hundred rupees, but never up to one or two thousand. In Pathwe they had this on the PAYA-GYI-DAUNG side, and U Myaing joined in whenever he came across in other villages a group who were playing while on business. When he was young he gambled away Rs. 700/- while on a trip to KYANGIN. They were all of them on the same boat and he lost that amount at DANUBYU. But by the time they reached YANDOON he had recovered his money. The games they played were poker and HO-HEK.

525 In their village they had people who held fights between game
541 cocks. U Myaing never bred any of these fowls but he has placed bets on them several times, small bets to the value of four or five rupees. There is no special announcement made but word gets around that there is to be a match at such and such a place on such and such a day, and at the appointed time the villagers who are interested all congregate at that spot.

There are bookmakers among the assembled villagers who are willing to take any bets on either side. Cock fighting is carried on during the months of PYATHO and TABAUNG. And even then they have it during only four or five days in the month. U Myaing does not go to every meeting. In the arena the ground is wet for game cock-fighting

1. [i.e., U Myaing -- ANALYST]

The whole family goes to the ANYEIN or marionette shows which are quite rare and sometimes not even seen in a year. If it is held 536
this held during the months of TAGU, KASON and T.ZAUNGMON. In the villages an ANYEIN gives over at about one or two in the morning.

The people from their village also go over to Karen villages 536
when they have puppet shows at cremation ceremonies. Some of the 764
Karens bury their dead and after three or four years they exhume the corpse to burn the bones and store the ashes away. At the ceremony for the cremation of the bones they stage these puppet shows and the members of U Myaing's family go to witness them.

In Pathwe the PYAZAT (stage performance or PWE) has not yet made an appearance. Ma Aye 536
Myaing had seen it in another village where she had to pay an admission charge of four annas. This was the only time she had seen it. On that occasion the show was followed by an enactment of one [779]
of the birth stories of Buddha and this went on till morning.

CHILDREN'S GAMES:

The children used to play several games. One of these was to 524
blind-fold one of their number and set him off in the direction of 857
an iron bar suspended about 25 yards away. The blindfolded boy was given an iron rod and it was his task to try and hit the suspended bar with his rod.

These games were played at a sports meeting organized for [621]
children and everyone in the village turned out to watch. Another item was the candle race where the children were given a lighted candle each and made to run a race. Then there was a cock fighting contest where two girls sat back on their haunches, faced each other and began to swing each knee forward alternatively until one or the other gave up. There was also a needle and thread race, a sack race, a one-legged race and an egg and spoon race. Each of these races were confined to only two contestants at a time.

CONYIN:- A CONYIN is the large flat seed and is used in a game that Burmese children play - U Myaing's children included. There have to be ten players, five a side and each side has to try and hit the seeds belonging to the opposing group according to complicated rules.

In Pathwe the children used to play marbles and not the youths [369]
as is sometimes found in Rangoon. In Pathwe the adults were all

524
857
[369]
[461]

In Pathwe the adults were all occupied with the question of how to acquire money. The children played at skipping a rope. There is also a game where two children sit facing each other and raise progressively higher and higher barriers with their feet and their hands, while a third child has to jump high enough to clear the obstruction. If he succeeds they raise it slightly higher and so on. If he fails, then it is his turn to provide the barrier with one while the other starts jumping from the lowest level. They also play the games "SALTS" and "HOP-SCOTCH" Then there is a game where about 20 children stand in a circle with faces turned inwards. There is a person left outside who runs round the circle and while running, drops a small bundle of cloth behind someone's back. If that person knows of it he picks up the bundle and chases the first child round the circle and if fleet enough has an opportunity of dealing him several hard whacks before he finds shelter in the vacant place of the person following and it is then the turn of the person with the bundle to make the rounds and drop it behind someone elses back. If a person does not realise that the bundle has been laid down behind him the first person completes another round, and then picks it up himself and chases him around the circle back to his own place.

There is another game which is known as "THE HUGE LIN-MWE SNAKE" where the children form a long line by holding each other's waist from behind. Someone then has to come pretending to sell something and the head of the line makes a purchase. When the seller demands payment he is referred by each child to the one behing him until the leader shouts that he can take the person last in the line in payment if he can catch him. The seller tries to do this while the whole line wriggles and twists in an effort to foil him.

When U Myaing was young he used to play "THE TURTLE AND THE ROOS". They first had to find a person who would play as the "turtle" and to do this they recited the Burmese alphabet starting with the letter "KA" for one person and "KHA" for the second and so on round and round the circle until the letter "A" is reached. The person on whom this letter falls has to be the "turtle". He is placed in a circle with as many stones as there are people in the game.

[212]

These are his "eggs" and it is his duty to guard them while the others cluster around trying to get them away from him without being caught in the attempt. If they are successful in getting all the eggs away they then go and hide them. The "turtle" then has to go and look for eggs while the rest follow her giving encouragement clapping hands and shouting the chant " LEIT U PY UK LO LEIT MA SHAR THU MHIN BYAR MOO ME MOO MET (Because her eggs are lost the poor female turtle is tearfully looking for them). If the child succeeds in catching any one in an attempt to get an egg away that person becomes the turtle. 527 858

In Pathwe they celebrated the water festival, but they did it in moderation and were satisfied if a person got slightly wet. MOH-LET-HSAUNG was given in the village. 527

U Myaing did not save any money in Pathwe. Sometimes he made a great deal of money and sometimes he made nothing at all. Sometimes if he had a lot of money he would loan it out to some one else to be returned in three or four months time if possible. Sometimes these loans continued unsettled for about a year. Only in Rangoon do you have to pay interest. In Pathwe if you did not borrow from chettiars you did not need to pay any interest. U Myaing did not go to the chettiars. He borrowed only from his relatives. There were people who went to raise money from the chettiar money lenders and some of them lost house, cultivation fields etc. because they could not pay the high rate of interest and had the mortgages on their property foreclosed. 454 426 [563]

Analysis of Social and Ceremonial Activities

The refugee camp may be regarded as a new village composed of families who came from villages in the delta similar to Pathwe but placed in an urban setting. The other refugees have the same understandings as to socio-ceremonial activities as U Myaing and the basic 621 722 [369]

621 722 structure of the social and political organization is the same in both places. However, the expectations and obligations of the original village are ill defined perhaps for the reason that the camp families no longer depend so completely on each other for their social and ceremonial activities. In Pathwe, U Myaing and his family were responsible citizens of the village as a whole. In camp, they are merely temporary residents with only the most rudimentary of obligations to their fellow refugees. The basic functions of the camp are carried out by semi-official persons. There is a minimum of feeling of solidarity in the camp where the immediate family is the major functioning unit.

Much has been lost with the passing of the communal activities of the small village. Yet the basic social and ceremonial activities [181] are still carried out in Rangoon. The community has become a large, impersonal one but the values are the same. The activities, as at the gigantic Shwe Dagon pagoda, duplicate those of the village on a grand scale and are hence more stimulating - but the family is no longer in a special status position and are nameless and unknown in their activities. Because of lack of money the activities are greatly curtailed in scope, but also the obligation is less. In this sense the family is "freed" from pressing obligations of the village where, for example, they were expected to contribute relatively large sums to community activities.

621 722 ●369 517 The familiar and beloved flavour of routine village activities is replaced by the excitment of life in the big town. Everything is new and different and while the basic understandings are still encountered the old restrictions of the small community have disappeared. Life in Rangoon is full of possibilities and amusement.

369 555 [465] 000 Recently (during the summer of 1951) U Myaing was promoted from street cleaner to boss of the cleaners of one section. He still gets a salary of Rs. 86/- a month but has the position of an overseer somewhat equivalent in status to the IN overseer's job in Pathwe. There are many opportunities for an honest and intelligent person to rise in Rangoon. In October 1951 U Myaing visited me to take an order for table mats. His samples were much too large and bound with a violent

orange cloth but he remembered my original order and wanted to make these specialty items. I directed him to some friends who I thought would be interested. He was dressed in a new white shirt, colourful new longyi, a brown cloth topee and leather sandals and looked prosperous and contented. Recently, Ma Aye Myaing had presented him with another baby daughter and both were doing well. I asked him when he was going back to Pathmo. "Yes," he said, "as soon as it is safe to return." Even a considerably higher salary would not persuade him to stay in Rangoon. Here "though the eye is rich, the pocket is poor". U Myaing is well on his way to making a successful adjustment as an urbanite -- but his heart will probably always remain in the village.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Data

The data presented above on the changing standard of living of the Burmese fisherman-refugee family may be briefly summarized as follows:

Home: A change from a large teak wood house personally owned to cramped quarters under the eves of a bamboo hut provided by the refugee camp. This represented a decline to 1/50th of the original home space but only to 1/10th of the original space used for the home vital functions of cooking, eating and sleeping. Home as a spacious area for social activities is replaced by an area used almost exclusively for the vital functions. There are no innovations and the pattern of home is not broken but is greatly contracted close to the minimum requirements.

Work: A change from a position as an overseer of a cooperative fishing organization with income from cattle and fish products manufacturing to a day labourer. This represented a severe drop in income and prestige but was not outside of the labouring pattern which U Myaing was familiar with from his youth. It is a return to his basic occupation. The "road back" to position and higher income is being taken - at the present writing (November 1951) U Myaing has been raised to coolie boss of a section of street cleaners. Opportunities for rising in Rangoon are good and the future is once more promising.

Clothing: U Myaing is reduced by 72% from his former quantity, and the females of the family by 41%. The social clothing and accoutrement have been sacrificed and the inventory reduced to the garments essential for basic living. Quality of clothing has greatly declined. The process has been one of severe contraction but the pattern has not been broken or innovations substituted.

Health: The health of the family appears to be relatively unimpaired by change. However, the medical data necessary to arrive at a reliable analysis could not be secured. The most we can say is that hygenic conditions have not materially altered in the camp situation, and the family is not aware of any radical changes in health. The proximity of modern medical aid in Rangoon is of course a great advantage in any emergencies of which the family is becoming

511
178
722
●369

increasingly cognisant.

Food: The relative quality of food has remained the same but many expensive items have been discarded. Cheap foods when known previously have been elevated to importance in the camp diet but no previously unknown foods have been accepted - the new trifles which have become popular with the family are close enough in taste to the Pathwe trifles no longer available. Many foods which were secured free in Pathwe now cost money and have been discarded or reduced in quantity. The diet is reduced close to the essentials.

Social and ceremonial activities: The active life in which the family was involved in a small folk community has given way to life in an urban community where the major consideration is gaining a livelihood. But the new life is promising and exciting and retains the basic activities of the village.

Concluding Analysis

121 Some preliminary conclusions can be drawn from this particular set of circumstances; also the data suggests hypothesis of wider application to Burmese culture specifically and human societies generally.

183 Nature of the case: The case is clearly one of reduction in standard of living where the pattern of living remains unbroken. As such, certain deductions concerning the flexibility of the pattern can be drawn. The general situation is a contraction where items were sloughed-off as the pattern approached a minimum situation. The extreme level beyond which the pattern would have broken and/or the family ceased to exist was not reached. Data on such cases would be most valuable in extending this study. For example, I heard of a case supposedly during the Japanese occupation where a girl became too poor to afford a longyi and had to use gunny-sacks for clothing. The story goes that this girl committed suicide. Also, during the war some families are reported to have been reduced to eating "only rice and ngapi" - apparently the irreducible condition. Data on families expanding economically would also be necessary to carry this type of study in the other direction. U Myaing's case gives data on the flexibility of the Burmese culture pattern under certain circumstances from a median point of average standard of living, to a point near the minimum standard.

183
369 The conditions under which this flexibility was observed were those of a displaced family uprooted from a folk society and replanted in an refugee community within an urban society. As such the case

gives important data on the process of urbanising villagers - the country people are an important group in the growth of the Burmese section of Rangoon; probably a large section of the present refugee population will stay in the future.

The concepts of pattern of living and standard of living: The Burmese pattern of living, or any culture pattern, is a universe of beliefs and practices manifested in acts and artifacts. The analogy of the "Universe" is a useful one in that it recognises a guiding body of understandings that controls the whole of the society (like "laws" of Universe) while emphasising the particular understandings that govern the various groups or classes of the society (like the "laws" of the Solar and other systems within the Universe). The "solar systems" are the standard levels of operations forming a comprehensive set of forces within itself. Families, like U Myaing's have a mobility, in the case understudy a forced change, which takes them out of one standard system into another. The adjustments which they undergo reflects the "laws" which control the various standard levels as well as the basic concepts controlling the whole of the society.

Each belief and practice has a range of expressions which can be defined. The particular expression practiced by a family is the standard or level of a phenomenon capable of expansion or contraction within prescribed limits. The ultimate limits are defined by the total range of expressions for the culture as a whole. But the practical limits for a family are defined by the possibilities of the society segment (community) in which they find themselves. Thus, the range of U Myaing's possibilities of expression are much greater in Rangoon than they were in Pathwe and greatly exceed his original ideas of what was possible. He may, for example, become a highly westernised political leader - although this seems unlikely in terms of his expectations. The westernised, urban spheres of Burmese culture is now opened to the family.

U Myaing is motivated by the basic expectations of the Burmese culture at a level applicable to his situation in terms of the possibilities of his social environment. In Pathwe, he was a fisherman and aspired to those things that fishermen should. In camp, he was at

181 565 555 first a bewildered refugee, but gradually assumed the role of a labourer rising in the ranks. The case indicates the mobility of the Burmese family and shows clearly that it may function successfully outside of the confines of its original social atmosphere.

182 594 621 156 The family in Burmese society: The successful mobility of U Nyaing's family indicate that the immediate family is the primary social unit of Burmese society. The Burmese community is then a congregation of immediate families who engage in activities of mutual benefit within the protective framework of the village structure. This interpretation high lights a particular type of individualism which is a family individualism depending on the roles of each [779] member of the family for its full expression. This concept seems tied to the Buddhist idea of individual salvation through acts of merit on the one hand and the exigencies of gaining a livelihood on the other. [474] The family is the basic economic unit and though it will enter cooperative endeavours (like the IN fisheries, or communal nat propitiations), has the ultimate responsibility and capabilities of support- [596] ing itself. The extended family is important, as indeed is the total village social structure, only in so far as it contributes to the maintenance of the individual immediate family of procreation including spouses, offspring and aged parents. The "looseness" of the social structure conversely allows mobility of the immediate families. This analysis indicates that attempts at modernizing of the Burmese people (acculturation) should meet with a minimum of structural obstacles - such as caste, clan and rigid associations might present.

181 156 ●369 555 The Burmese culture pattern and the individual: The village culture pattern is dominated by a series of relatively simple, interrelated ideas held by all. Each individual feels himself temporily occupying a particular situation which is only one of many existences and but an instant in eternity. He is fated to be a member of a particular family with a set of opportunities through life. Life should be pleasant and must be virtuous if future existences are to be pleasant. He must realise as fully as possible the talents and opportunities that come to him through his KARMA situation. In the villages this concept is a great stabilizing force and tends to make an individual content with

511
565
[369]
[735]
000

represented by the boat and shack dwellers of Rangoon's water-front as well as the beggar class of the villages.

Future Studies: This study has explored a portion of the Burmese culture pattern seen in dynamic situation of one family's case. It has indicated the importance of the family unit in Burmese society and expressed qualitatively two levels or standards of living. A study of a functioning community to define the interworkings of the family group and other social groups is being carried out at the present time by the Burma Community Research Project of the Department of Anthropology, University of Rangoon. The hypothesis developed in this paper will be further explored and new concepts of Burmese culture and society developed in the village project.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

in spite of its greatness in other directions, from being a great period of Burmese literature. The love of beauty, which is the basis of all literature, had adequate satisfaction in the developed art of architecture. The poets of Pagan wrote their poems in bricks, instead of words, and their pagodas are still famous. When one stands on the shore of the Irrawaddy and looks towards the ruins of Pagan, one is reminded of the delicate beauty of an incomplete poem.[1]

Pagan fell in 1287 as the result of the Tartar onslaught during the time of Kubla Khan, the Scourge of God, and the country broke up into several little States, each attempting to control the others. For the next fifty years, political struggles went on in the capitals, but they failed to disturb the peace of smaller towns and villages. Many who had grown tired of the strife around the thrones flocked to the quiet of the village monasteries in order to find peace. Religion went on undiminished, but the learning connected with it decayed, for the royal patronage was lacking. Architecture also decayed because there was no royal support and because the country had become poor. Men turned to literature for its own sake, and during this period Burmese prose and poetry assumed definite forms with fully developed diction, rhythm, rhyme and style.[2]

[1] Many temples and pagodas of the Pagan period are in an excellent state of preservation and are still in use as places of worship. Scott O'Conner's *Mandalay and Other Cities* contains fine illustrations of the more famous of these religious buildings.

The achievement of the Pagan kings, the 'Temple Builders', is summed up by Harvey thus: 'The legacy of their fleeting sway has enriched posterity for ever. It was they who made the sun-scorched wilderness, the solitary plain of Myingyan, to blossom forth into the architectural magnificence of Pagan. If they produced no nation-builder like Simon de Montfort, no lawgiver like Edward I, they unified Burma for more than two centuries, and that in itself was an achievement. But their role was æsthetic and religious rather than political. To them the world owes in great measure the preservation of Theravada Buddhism, one of the purest faiths mankind has ever known. Brahminism had strangled it in the land of its birth; in Ceylon its existence was threatened again and again; east of Burma it was not yet free from priestly corruptions; but the kings of Burma never wavered, and at Pagan the stricken faith found a city of refuge. Vainglorious tyrants built themselves lasting sepulchres, but none of these men has a tomb. . . . These men's magnificence went to glorify their religion, not to deck the tent wherein they camped during this transitory life.'—*History of Burma*, p. 70.

[2] Ibid., p. 103. Since that time, prose and poetry show continuous development. The full history of Burmese literature still remains unwritten. However, the *Anthology of Burmese Literature*, a Government publication,

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

The rise of the *Nibhatkhin* was the result of the rise of the vernacular literature, for then learning had reached the people. But we do not quite know at what time the *Nibhatkhin* first came into being. According to tradition, the custom of holding religious processions and pageants had existed long before 1752, about which time the interlude and the *Hawsa* (a recitation of a story in verse) came into being, but how long before nobody can tell. However, as it must have taken some time for the vernacular literature to take root, I adopt tentatively 1531 to 1752 as the period of the *Nibhatkhin*.

For the story of the development of the *Nibhatkhin*, I am dependent on tradition alone. The tradition of its development from the pageant is quite logical. Moreover, it is general and not confined to a particular district. I have discussed it with various Burmese scholars and I have made inquiries in far-away villages, and always I find the same tradition. In some out-of-the-way villages, which the influences that affected the drama at the capital had failed to reach, the development of the *Nibhatkhin* from the pageant was within living memory. Until recently, in such villages, one could even see the *Nibhatkhin* in its various stages of development. One village would be presenting a procession, another a pageant, a third would be staging a fully developed *Nibhatkhin*; in all the villages, their particular practice had been the custom for many years, further development having been checked by the introduction of the drama in its more mature stages by touring troupes of professional actors, and it had continued to exist side by side with the performances of strolling players, just as some miracle plays continued to be presented in certain places in England during the heyday of the Elizabethan

Under Bayinnaung (1551–81) the whole of Indo-China, the outlying provinces of China, and Manipur owed allegiance to the Burmese king. After his death, the Empire decayed until the ruler of Pegu, who had become independent, defeated the Burmese, and turned Burma into a Talaing Empire in 1752. The Empire was short-lived, for in the same year Alaungpaya rebelled, founded the last Burmese dynasty, and 'Burmanized' the Talaings by force. He and his successors turned Burma into one united kingdom, which with the Shan States, Siam, Manipur, and Assam, formed the Burmese Empire. The period 1752–1819 was the Age of Triumph, a fuller account of which is given in chap. ii.

The Burmese lost Assam, Manipur, and the native provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim to the British in 1824. The rest of Lower Burma fell into British hands in 1852. On 1 January 1886 the whole country was proclaimed a province of the Indian Empire.

So the worship of the nats lived on, and with the advance of
795 civilization the spirit dances became elaborate, for though the belief
535 was primitive, the people were no longer so. The dances benefited from the developments that had taken place in Burmese music which, as we have seen, flourished under the patronage of the Pagan kings. New spirits were added, and they were usually those of heroic princes. The dancers were now many, for the mediums turned themselves into dancing and music mistresses. The chief medium of each spirit dressed herself in the special dress of the spirit, but the junior mediums, who were equivalent to the chorus of an English revue, were in the dress of Burmese princesses. It is interesting to note the
[292] origin of this dress. The mediums realized the necessity of dressing
[565] themselves in fine raiment, but as everybody wore clothes of bright colours, the only solution of the problem was to don the dress of the court and official class, which the commoners were forbidden to
[536] wear by law, except during feasts and dances. When drama proper came into being, the hero and the heroine dressed themselves in the court dress, even when they were representing common characters.

3. Miracles and Interludes

175 After the fall of the kingdom of Pagan in A.D. 1257, Burma was
● 369 the scene of fierce civil wars, but the trouble was mainly in the
726 capitals; in the villages and small towns life went on in its joyous
779 way. Religion continued to spread in spite of the fact that the throne
538 of Pagan was no longer in existence to support it. Learning began to reach the remotest parts of the country, carried far and near by monks. To escape from the aimless strife of the civil wars, men turned towards literature. Money was lacking to compose poems in brick as had been done at Pagan, and men now expressed their love for the religion and their love for the beautiful in writing. The new literature further educated the people and made even stronger the already strong religious fervour. As a result, at village feasts and on days of public rejoicing, the people turned towards their religion for amusement and entertainment. So pageants depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha and from his Birth Stories came into being.

796 Pageants were given on ordinary carts that were in use for all
541 kinds of transport and which are still in use in backward parts of the
493 country at the present day. Each cart carried a group of (amateur) actors standing still and representing a set scene. Originally, no doubt, there were only a few carts representing scenes from different stories. Later, a pageant came to consist of many carts and many

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

was prevailing in China and Tibet by about the third century A.D. In any case, the ever-increasing population, alien to Hindu culture, must have acted against the intensity of the Hindu influence. Moreover, Siam was one of the earliest converts from Hinduism to Buddhism which, especially after the great Buddhist missionary, Buddhagosa, who lived in the fifth century, was ousting Brahmanism in Indo-China. At the Siamese court, however, the Hindu tradition was very strong, and remained so even when the king and his courtiers had become Buddhists.

In Siam, as in the neighbouring regions, learning did not reach the people for a long time even though it flourished at the court. The Hindu tradition was not strong enough to prevent the courtiers from creating a native literature. Buddhism prevented the courtiers from looking upon the Hindu learning with a conservatism that would not have allowed imitations. In Cambodia and elsewhere native ideas could never shake off the dominance of Hindu culture, and no native literature could come into being until quite modern times. Moreover, the very fact that the Hindu tradition was strong prevented the survival of Sanskrit literature in those regions, for once the tradition was broken, only chaos resulted. To make it clear, I will take the Java shadow-play. Sanskrit dramatic representation gave rise to the Java shadow-play. Therefore, one would expect Java to preserve a Hindu dramatic literature to herself and to the world. But it failed to do so. The shadow-play of Java is interesting as a special kind of dramatic performance, and not as dramatic literature. The stories that are presented on the shadow-stage in Java are taken mostly from the Hindu epics, but they have very little dramatic structure. Yet originally they must have been developed Sanskrit plays. Of course, to begin with, the Sanskrit shadow-plays themselves were slight in structure, but by no means so crude as the Javanese ones. The Hindu tradition was so strong that once it was destroyed, not only did the Hindu drama in Java decay and disappear, but a native drama in a developed form failed to appear. Stories from Hindu sources as well as stories from native history and mythology are still shown on the Java shadow-stage, but the plays are all formless and crude. In Cambodia, where the Hindu tradition was indeed very strong and lasted much longer, some remnants of the developed Sanskrit drama are preserved, but the tradition was so strong that no native element could enter it. There, up to the present day, a State theatre, with a special minister

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

177 of State, presents the *Ramayana*, and less frequently that play which
369 the Burmese calls the *Eenaung*.[1] Both are remnants of Sanskrit plays
564 no doubt introduced by the early Hindu kings. Throughout the
538 centuries, the two plays have been regularly presented with the full
101 patronage of the king and all the splendour at his command. It is almost a ritual. During the intervening centuries, no fresh incentive had come from India, and no new element, no native element, was allowed to enter it; the result was that the Cambodian *Ramayana* soon lost its freshness. Cambodia, therefore, not only has no native drama; it also failed to preserve for posterity good examples of Sanskrit dramatic literature.

101 To return to Siam. Even the courtiers did not look upon the
539 Hindu tradition with too much awe and conservatism. They recog-
[564] nized and retained the vital elements of Hindu culture as far as
536 possible so as not to clash with native and Buddhistic elements. The results of such special circumstances are best seen in Siamese literature. The court encouraged and the courtiers produced romances based on and in imitation of Sanskrit-Hindu romances. Native ideas, native tales, and native mythology were introduced into works modelled on Hindu literary works. In drama, the Siamese did not produce native plays, and they retained the *Ramayana* as a play. But they introduced new ideas and kept alive the old. In dramatic literature, as in all other matters, the Siamese had to reject all that was contrary to Buddhism, and some were retained only after much alteration to suit new needs. A consideration of the Siamese play of *Rama* shows clearly the above facts.

The epic tradition was very strong in India and it prevented Sanskrit drama from rising to still greater heights. In the new Hindu regions of Indo-China and the Malay Archipelago epic tradition was equally strong, if not stronger. In India the Sanskrit drama was shackled by the epic tradition; in the new regions the drama was very probably entirely subordinated to the epic. The dramatic performances in Cambodia, in Siam, in Java, before modern influences came in, were based mostly on the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana*. Perhaps it is legitimate to assume that the Sanskrit plays introduced into the new Hindu kingdoms were mostly those based on the epics: mostly, but not all. For the *Eenaung*, which is very probably from Hindu-Sanskrit sources, tells a story unconnected with the two epics.

[1] This is explained in the next section.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

775*
792
182

Several consequent questions arise. How, for example, can we account for the persistence of this popular heresy, if indeed it be heresy, in view of the fact that the monastic Order is so influential? Heresies, it is true, flourish underground in every religion. But this 'heresy' is very much above ground. Are the monks themselves heretical, or the laity less heretical than they may appear to be?

Partial explanations will at once come to mind. Appeal may be made to the Buddhist emphasis on toleration, and further appeal may be made to the recognised distinction between what is expected of the layman and what is expected of the monk: the layman cannot be required to understand the truth which is only attained through monkish disciplines. These explanations are pertinent. But they are not sufficient.

The further explanation is to be found in certain undertones, certain basic tendencies, certain similarities of approach which influence monks and laity alike. These may be summed up and defined as the Agnostic Emphasis and the Ethical Emphasis. Making these emphases though in different ways, learned bhikkus and simple villagers are in deeper, more effective sympathy than might be supposed if we merely isolate and regard their more explicit and divergent conceptions. In both cases, the resultant outlook is positive rather than negative. Hence the persistence of a lively popular faith which may seem at times to contradict its own basic dogmas.

In the following paragraphs, I shall select those results of my own inquiries which may elucidate this situation. I shall attempt to show how, in Burmese Buddhism, a fundamental agnosticism is derived in part from ethical considerations, and, secondly, how this agnosticism is associated with a positive faith, differently expressed but jointly affirmed by monk and layman, scholar and peasant.

The popular conception of Nibbāna will concern us first. But here there is need for discrimination. Whom have we in mind when we speak of this popular opinion? Burma is a country of villages, and we may conceive some very primitive peasant whose only concern is his rice field, his plough and his oxen. Over against such a simple peasant we may set the scholarly monk. But we must also bear in mind that large, intermediate class, already noted, which includes the more instructed layman and the less instructed monk.

775*
779*
182
369

Nor should we exaggerate the simplicity of the Burmese villager. The Burmese may be a rural community, but they are also a civilised community, schooled and intelligent, very conscious of the difference between their conditions and the conditions of the surrounding, more primitive hill tribes. On the other hand, in seeking to estimate the popular opinion, we must be equally alert against the temptation to

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

identify the majority of the people with the comparatively few sophisticated Burmans to be found in the larger towns.

With this qualification in mind, we can agree with those observers who represent the popular conception of Nibbāna as a picture of some superheaven, some final sphere of complete happiness. We can also agree that they are right in distinguishing this conception from the ideas of the learned bhikkus. This is what must be said if the issue is pressed to the point of definition. But who exerts this pressure, who requires this definition, who is it that is bold to be explicit? Not the villager himself! It is the outside observer, the scholar impatient to complete his analysis. The villager himself is reserved and hesitant. He is far from attempting any explication. He is much too aware of the fact that for him Nibbāna is a distant prospect, wrapt in mystery. In a vague way he sees Nibbāna as the end of a chequered existence, the beginning of an entirely different and better life, in a vague way he may picture Nibbāna as he pictures the legendary heavens, but always in a vague way. He is never as explicit as the inquisitive inquirer wants him to be.

Nor is this hesitation solely characteristic of the more simple, more inarticulate villager. I recall a conversation with a Buddhist journalist. He was very clear and prompt in most of his answers to my questions. He distinguished lucidly, for example, between prayer and Buddhist meditation. He was convinced that Buddhism allowed no place for belief in God. He emphasised that Buddhists could not be said to believe in 'transmigration' since they rejected any 'soul' theory. But when it came to the question of Nibbāna, he paused. Nibbāna was not annihilation. On that he was clear. What *did* it mean then? Well, it might mean Life — life in contrast, perhaps, to 'mere existence' — but he added quickly that it was impossible to define. Nibbāna was a *mystery*.

This conversation was typical of many others I held with laymen. Typical, too, was the hesitation concerning Nibbāna. In one or two cases I was reminded that the Buddha himself did not consider the subject profitable. The scripture was maybe recalled: the complaint, for example, of the dissatisfied monk that the Buddha had left many questions unsettled, and the Buddha's reply: "Anyone who should say, 'I will not lead the religious life under Buddha until Buddha explains all these points' that man would die before Buddha had ever explained these points to him."[28]

The blind men and the elephant have often been quoted to me. Each blind man touched a different part of the elephant, and each one naturally came to a different conclusion. The man who felt the trunk said it

[28] *M.I.* 426.; cf. De La Vallée Poussin, *The Way to Nirvana*, pp. 128, 129.